

Chair's Summary

Peacebuilding Commission Working Group on Lessons Learned

Promoting Collaboration and Improving Coordination between the PBC and Regional and sub-regional Organizations: A Briefing by ECOWAS and the OAS

1. On 30 March 2009, the Peacebuilding Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned (Working Group) convened a panel discussion on "*Promoting Collaboration and Improving Coordination between the PBC and Regional and sub-regional Organizations.*" The meeting focused on the experiences of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), particularly in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau and the experiences of the Organization of American States (OAS), particularly in Haiti.

2. In her opening remarks, the chair of the Working Group, Ambassador Carmen Maria Gallardo Hernandez, Permanent Representative of El Salvador to the United Nations, underlined the increasingly significant role of regional and sub-regional institutions in peacebuilding, including in countries on the PBC's agenda. She also highlighted the importance of enhancing collaboration between the PBC and regional and sub-regional organizations. To this end, the Chair noted that the key objectives of the meetings were: a) to extract lessons from the experiences of ECOWAS and OAS, and b) to explore additional opportunities for partnership and collaboration between the PBC (sub) regional organizations. The Chair invited Ambassador Albert R. Ramdin, Assistant Secretary General of OAS and Mr. Isaac Aggrey, the Special Representative of ECOWAS President in Guinea-Bissau to make presentations and share lessons from their respective experiences.

3. Ambassador Ramdin provided a briefing on the efforts of OAS in Haiti and offered some concrete suggestions for how the PBC could support and strengthen the efforts of (sub) regional organizations and the strategic partnerships among them. In particular, Ambassador Ramdin stressed that OAS would be interested in hosting a special forum or a dialogue of the PBC with regional and sub-regional organizations to share lessons and experiences and to develop more robust partnerships.

4. Mr. Aggrey observed that ECOWAS has developed a number of mechanisms and tools for regional peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peacebuilding activities, such as *the Protocol for the Establishment of a Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management, Resolution, Peacekeeping and Security*, *the Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance* and *the 2008 ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework*. These mechanisms and the lessons learned from their application in Sierra Leone, Liberia, and Guinea Bissau have served as some of the building blocks for regional instruments of the African Union and could possibly offer a model for (sub) regional initiatives in other parts of the world. Mr. Aggrey also stressed that collaboration between ECOWAS and the PBC has

become a compelling necessity given their shared interests in Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau.

5. During the interactive discussion following these initial presentations, several member states, including representatives of the countries on the PBC's agenda, took the floor to underscore the following points and recommendations:

- ❖ National ownership and building of effective national capacities should be the fundamental principles guiding the engagement of international and regional actors in peacebuilding.
- ❖ Regional and sub-regional actors are often best placed to provide external assistance to peace consolidation efforts of national and local actors given their knowledge and expertise of the country and its needs and priorities. Furthermore, regional actors may also be better placed to provide the political accompaniment and support often needed in post-conflict and fragile environments.
- ❖ However, regional organizations often lack the technical capacity and the resources to take full advantage of their expertise and political positioning. The PBC should explore opportunities to mobilize resources and technical support for the efforts of regional and sub-regional organizations in the countries on its agenda. The PBC should also foster coordination and a common approach among international and regional actors involved in the countries on its agenda.
- ❖ The work of the PBC on countries on its agenda must seriously consider regional and sub-regional dimensions of conflict and the particular needs of border communities. In particular, the PBC should explore creative opportunities for greater information sharing and collaboration with ECOWAS on Guinea Bissau and Sierra Leone.
- ❖ The PBC should seek enhanced collaboration and contribute to information sharing and lessons learning among regional and sub-regional organizations, stressing south-south partnerships. In this regard, the PBC should build on existing strategic partnerships and agreements between the OAS and the AU.
- ❖ The PBC should give serious consideration to the OAS proposal to convene a special forum of the PBC with regional and sub-regional organizations. Such a forum could lead to a more effective partnership between the PBC and the relevant (sub) regional organizations.

*Prepared by PBSO
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